

**2a - HB 1146 (3rd) - FIN - MDH - LOSAA.pdf**

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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**Re: HB 1146 – Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Health Care Commission – Dental Services – Survey and Regional Needs Assessment – Letter of Support as Amended**

Dear Chair Griffith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support as amended for House Bill (HB) 1146 – Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Health Care Commission – Dental Services – Survey and Regional Needs Assessment.

This bill will require (1) MDH and the Maryland Hospital Association to conduct a survey of hospitals to identify the availability of hospital operating room resources for dentist use, and (2) MDH and the Maryland Health Care Commission (in consultation with the Maryland Hospital Association and the Maryland Ambulatory Surgery Association) to conduct a regional needs assessment for dental procedures that require anesthesia or moderate sedation.

MDH is dedicated to ensuring that Maryland Medical Assistance participants are able to access covered dental services, including those delivered in the hospital setting, in a timely manner. The report required by this bill will be helpful in assessing available resources and regional needs to inform planning to ensure access to care is not compromised.

If you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at [megan.peters@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.peters@maryland.gov) or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

# **HB 1146\_Crossover\_MDH and MHCC\_Dental Services\_Sur**

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Maryland  
Hospital Association

March 23, 2023

To: The Honorable Melony G. Griffith, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 1146- Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Health Care Commission- Dental Services- Survey and Regional Needs Assessment

Dear Chair Griffith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 1146, as amended by the House. The COVID-19 pandemic caused many disruptions in the health care system, including increased acuity due to patients deferring care and requirements to halt scheduled, non-emergent procedures (also referred to as "elective"). Hospitals are working to address these backlogs in care. This includes an increased need for operating room space for complicated dental cases that required general anesthesia, particularly for pediatric patients.

Currently, about half of Maryland's hospitals provide operating room time and staff for dental procedures scheduled by community dentists—with over 6,500 procedures performed annually. Virtually all hospitals have block scheduling availability for these procedures, and the two that do not offer block time work with dentists to schedule their cases. None of these hospitals have stopped providing OR time or staff and all remain committed to providing ongoing access for this critical need. We do recognize, however, that immediate steps were needed to support these patients.

Since being made aware of the waiting lists from community dentists, hospitals increased OR availability. For example, a hospital in Western Maryland agreed to accommodate any dentist who would need space and was able to credential and onboard a dentist at that hospital. Another hospital in Baltimore County that does not have equipment to accommodate dental procedures is looking to procure the proper tools, and in Howard County, Baltimore County, and Baltimore City, hospitals are credentialing and privileging additional dentists. MHA worked closely with the Maryland State Dental Association to connect dentists and hospital leadership to discuss waitlists and identify opportunities to schedule procedures. This is progress, and it will continue. However, we need a sustainable, data informed plan to ensure access long-term across the state, regardless of whether that access is in a hospital setting or ambulatory surgery center.

MHA collaborated with the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Health Care Commission to develop amendments adopted by the House in HB 1146. The amendments establish a process to look at regional data and capacity on a regional basis and develop targeted plans for each area of the state. The report will also analyze subsidies provided by hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers to anesthesiologists. This approach will enable MDH to develop a plan to ensure access to every Marylander to needed OR space for dental procedures. MHA and

our hospitals are committed to partnering over the interim to advance this work and identify long-term solutions.

MHA appreciates the leadership of House Health & Government Operations Chair Joseline Peña-Melnyk, who brought stakeholders together throughout session to work through this complex but important issue, as well as Delegate Nic Kipke for his sponsorship of this legislation.

For more information, please contact:

Nicole Stallings, Executive Vice President and Chief External Affairs Officer  
Nstallings@mhaonline.org

**2b - HB 1146 - FIN - MACHO - LOSWA.pdf**

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**2023 SESSION  
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL: HB 1146 – Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Health Care Commission – Dental Services – Survey and Regional Needs Assessment**

**COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee**

**POSITION: Letter of Support With Amendments**

**BILL ANALYSIS: Requires the Maryland Department of Health to conduct a survey of hospitals to identify the availability of hospital operating resources for dentist use and requires the Department and the Health Care Commission to develop regional plans to ensure the availability of certain operating space for the performance of certain dental procedures.**

**POSITION RATIONALE:** The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) is in support of HB 1146 *with* the below listed amendments. In some areas of Maryland, access to dental procedures that require general anesthesia is insufficient to meet residents’ needs. This is particularly problematic for children covered by Maryland Medicaid, for adults with special needs, and in rural areas. Public health officials applaud the attention that HB 1146 gives to this problem, but the bill fails to specifically address the needs of vulnerable groups, including children who are covered under Medicaid. Due to several factors, Medicaid recipients are disproportionately blocked from access to critical dental services that can only be safely provided outside of standard dental offices. To better assure that every child and adult with special needs has access to safe and appropriate dental services, MACHO respectfully suggests the following amendments for consideration:

**We recommend adding to Page 3, Line 22 following “Hospital Association”:**

**“AND THE MARYLAND STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION”**

**We recommend adding to Page 3, Line 22 following “a survey of hospitals”:**

**“AND DENTISTS”**

**We recommend adding to Section A:**

**(a)(6) THE PERCENTAGE OF DENTAL PATIENTS TREATED IN OPERATING ROOMS COVERED BY MARYLAND MEDICAID.**

**We recommend adding to Page 4, Line 2 following “Maryland Hospital Association”:**

**“AND THE MARYLAND STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION”**

**We recommend adding to Section B:**

**(b)(5) ADEQUACY OF OPERATING ROOM AND AMBULATORY SURGERY CENTER ACCESS FOR MARYLAND MEDICAID RECIPIENTS IN NEED OF DENTAL CARE, PARTICULARLY FOR CHILDREN AND RURAL RESIDENTS.**

**We recommend adding to Page 4, Line 13 following “Maryland Hospital Association”:**

**“AND THE MARYLAND STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION”**

These amendments to the House Bill would improve access to dental care, particularly for underserved children and high-risk adults with high acuity healthcare needs. For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of support with amendments for HB 1146. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at [рмаiora1@jhu.edu](mailto:рмаiora1@jhu.edu) or 410-937-1433.